positions in all tur and urad contracts at the closing price on 23.10.2007. FMC also directed the Exchanges not to launch new contract in these commodities without its prior approval, and permission already granted by FMC to launch contracts in urad and tur were withdrawn.

Similarly, FMC had on 27.02.2007 directed all the three National Exchanges not to launch any new wheat and rice contracts. In the letter to the Exchanges, FMC directed that permission already granted for yet to be launched contracts stands revoked and that in respect of running contracts in these commodities no new position should be allowed to be taken. Only squaring up of positions would be allowed.

Drought situation in Bundelkhand region

†*235. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether drought situation has emerged due to absence of rainfall in several districts of Bundelkhand region in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) whether Government is introducing a scheme of water supply there for the purpose of drinking water and agricultural work; and

(c) whether Government is considering to provide any financial package to State Government by taking emergency measures keeping in view the migration of people?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) As reported by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), during South-West Monsoon 2007 (1.6.2007 to 30.9.2007), Madhya Pradesh received 819.1 mm of rainfall against normal average rainfall of 989 mm, with a deviation of -17%. According to the IMD, out of 45 meteorological districts in the State, 6 received excess rainfall (+20% or more), 15 received normal rainfall (+19% to -19%), 22 received deficient rainfall (-20% to-59%) and 2 received scanty rainfall (-60% to -99%).

2. This year, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has declared drought in 157 tehsils of 37 districts in the State, including some areas in the Bundelkhand region. According to State Government, 21 districts are completely affected and 16 districts are partialy affected.

3. It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to take necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought. The Government of India supplements the efforts of the State with financial and logistic support. The State Government takes necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities with the funds available in the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF), in accordance with the laid down items and norms of expenditure for assistance from CRF/National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). In case the fund available in the CRF is insufficient, the State Government is required to submit a memorandum for grant of assistance from the NCCF, which is considered in accordance with a laid down procedure. The State Government is reported to be taking necessary measures to tackle the drought situation, which include arrangements to supply drinking water in the affected rural and urban areas.

4. The State Government has submitted a memorandum for assistance of Rs. 1548.91 crores from the NCCF in the wake of current drought. An Inter-Ministerial Central Team visited the State from 18th to 21st February, 2008, for an on-the-spot assessment of the

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

drought situation. Further action will be taken in accordance with the procedure for assistance from the NCCF.

Mumbai-Kanyakumari dedicated high speed corridor

*236. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways propose to construct high speed passenger corridors;

(b) if so, the details of the regions that would be covered by these corridors;

(c) the details of the stations proposed to be connected in the southern region;

(d) whether there is proposal for Mumbai-Kanyakumari dedicated high speed corridor;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the time by which the work on these projects is expected to begin?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Ministry of Railways had decided only to conduct pre-feasibility studies for construction of high speed passenger corridors, one each in the Northern, Western, Southern and Eastern regions of the country. The selected corridors are as below:

(i) Delhi-Chandigarh-Amritsar

(ii) Pune-Mumbai-Ahmedabad

(iii) Hyderabad-Dornakal-Vijayawada-Chennai

(iv) Chennai-Bangalore-Coimbatore-Ernakulam

(v) Howrah-Haldia

(c) The station which would be connected by Southern corridor will be known only after completion of pre-feasibility studies and will depend on demand, financial viability and operational feasibility.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) A proposal from Chief Minister of Kerala has been received for Mumbai-Kanyakumari corridor. Ministry of Railways is undertaking a pre-feasibility study of Bangalore-Coimbatore-Ernakulam section of this corridor.

(f) Global tenders for engaging a Consultant for conducting pre-feasibility studies are under process. A decision shall be taken only after these studies are completed and evaluated.

Effective scheme to improve the condition of farmers

†*237. SHRI BHAGWATI SINGH:
SHRI BRIJ BHUSHAN TIWARI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that farmers are not getting the benefits of facilities and packages declared by Government due to which they are compelled to commit suicide owing to indebtedness;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi